

Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council

The Council is an independent state agency formed under Pennsylvania statute (Act 89, as amended by Act 14) in order to address rapidly growing health care costs. The Council's strategy to contain costs is to stimulate competition in the health care market by:

- A) giving comparative information about the most efficient and effective health care providers to individual consumers and group purchasers of health services; and
- B) giving information to health care providers that they can use to identify opportunities to contain costs and improve the quality of care they deliver.

Act 89, as amended by Act 14, specifically assigns the Council three primary responsibilities:

- 1) to collect, analyze and make available to the public data about the cost and quality of health care in Pennsylvania;
- 2) to study, upon request, the issue of access to care for those Pennsylvanians who are uninsured;
- 3) to review and make recommendations about proposed or existing mandated health insurance benefits upon request of the legislative or executive branches of the Commonwealth.

What kind of data does the Council collect?

The Council collects over 3.8 million inpatient hospital discharge and ambulatory/outpatient procedure records each year from hospitals and freestanding ambulatory surgery centers in Pennsylvania. This data, which includes hospital charge and treatment information as well as other financial data, is collected on a quarterly basis and is then verified by PHC4 staff. The Council also collects data from managed care plans on a voluntary basis.

What does the Council do with these data?

The Council shares this data with the public through free public reports. Since its creation, PHC4 has published hundreds public reports about health care in Pennsylvania. These reports are widely distributed, and can be found on the Council's Web site, www.phc4.org, and in most public libraries throughout the state. The Council has also produced hundreds of customized reports and data sets through its *Special Requests* division for a wide variety of users including hospitals, policy-makers, researchers, physicians, insurers, and other group purchasers.

How is the Council funded?

The Council is funded through the Pennsylvania state budget. In addition, the Council receives revenue through the sale of its data to health care stakeholders around the state, the nation, and the world.